

REMARKS

Prior to the present Amendment, claims 1-24 were all the claims pending in the present application. Claims 1-21 remain rejected on the prior art grounds of record. Claims 22-24 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claim 22 without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, upon entry of the present Amendment, claims 1-21, 23, and 24 will be all the claims pending in the application.

I. Formal Matters

Applicant thanks the Examiner for initialing and returning the PTO SB/08 Form submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement of May 29, 2007, indicating that the documents cited therein have been considered.

II. Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-2, 7-8, and 13-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent Appln. Publ. No. 2002/0154895 to Maruyama et al. ("Maruyama"). By this Amendment, claims 1, 7, and 13 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 22, which the Examiner indicated is allowable. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 1, 7, and 13 are now allowable. Since claims 2, 8, and 14 are dependent upon claims 1, 7, and 13, respectively, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies.

III. Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 3-6, 9-12, and 15-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Maruyama taken alone.

Since claims 3-6 and 19 are dependent upon claim 1, claims 9-12 and 20 are dependent upon claim 7, and claims 15-18 and 21 are dependent upon claim 13, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies.

IV. Allowable Claims

Claims 22-24 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant submits that claims 23 and 24 remain allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 1.

V. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

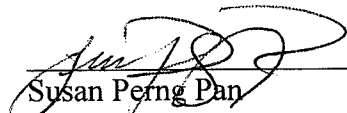
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